

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 27, 2004

Mr. Robert Varney
Regional Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 1
1 Congress Street, Suite 1100
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

Dear Bob:

We are writing to register our views for the public comment period on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the designation of dredged material disposal sites in Central and Western Long Island Sound.

Long Island Sound is a source of livelihood, nourishment and recreation for many in Connecticut and New York. It is a valuable resource to our states and the nation both environmentally and economically – providing a watershed for 10 percent of the American population and contributing \$6 billion annually to the regional economy. We are fully committed to its protection.


Dredging is a necessary part of maintaining the Sound's safe navigation and long-term viability. Recognizing this, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) FEIS designated in April 2004 the Central and Western Long Island Sound sites for long-term open-water dredged material disposal. We support this determination and have serious concerns about the efforts of some to undermine this decision under the misguided supposition that environmental degradation will necessarily ensue.

Let us be clear: we all agree the Long Island Sound should be protected from spoil. Critics of the site determination, however, ignore decades of scientific research and a fundamental FEIS conclusion -- that any potential adverse impacts to the Sound's marine environment associated with dredged material disposal at the Central and Western sites would be minimal and could be mitigated with appropriate site management. In fact, as you know, the old abandoned disposal sites are now viable fishery areas.

Decades of study and rigorous management have convinced us that these sites can be used for safe disposal of materials that have been tested and found suitable. The EIS process has taken long enough, already resulting in the suspension of operations at the Central Long Island Sound disposal site and costly delays of dredging projects critical to maintaining safe navigation in the Sound. Further delays and operational reductions will unnecessarily burden the Connecticut maritime industry at no scientific rationale.

We strongly support the EPA's FEIS, which recognizes the unique value and range of interests in the Sound and maintains important guidelines for its protection. It is time to move forward with its implementation.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. Dodd
United States Senator



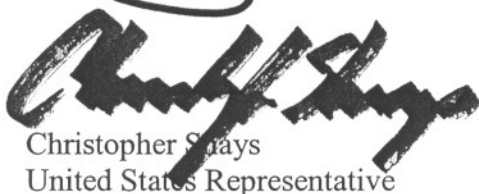
Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



Rob Simmons
United States Representative



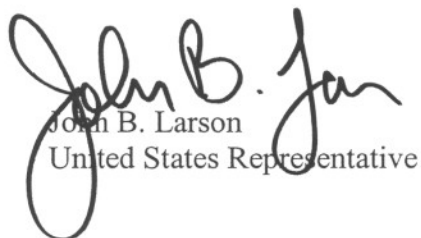
Nancy Johnson
United States Representative



Christopher Shays
United States Representative



Rosa DeLauro
United States Representative



John B. Larson
United States Representative

Cc: The Honorable Mike Leavitt